

Cotati Historical Society Newsletter

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Preserving Cotati's Past
PO Box 7013 Cotati, CA 94931
chsinfo@sonic.net www.cotatihistoricalsociety.org

Summer 2021

Marie McNaughton, Editor

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	John Allred, 795-2791
Vice President	Ed Gilar di
Secretary	Velma DiMeola
Treasurer	John Dell'Osso
Director	Bobbie Veronda
Archiving Administrator	Judy Gustafson

MORE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

STAFF

Website Coordinator	Stephen Gold
Docent Coord.	Marie McNaughton

COTATI MUSEUM HOURS

Still **CLOSED** to the public due to COVID-19.

For research, donations & other concerns, call 707-794-0305.

*Inside Cotati City Hall
201 W. Sierra Avenue*

THE CHS MISSION

As stated in our Articles of Incorporation, dated April 11, 2007, the specific purposes of the Cotati Historical Society are (1) to protect and preserve the history and culture of the City of Cotati, (2) to provide a permanent resource (museum and interpretive programs) for the preservation of artifacts, memorabilia and documents illustrating the past and present life of the Cotati community, municipality, and its citizens, and (3) to reach out to the general community and to support similarly guided educational and historical agencies.

Seven Exchange Bank Robberies in 21 years! New Year's Eve 1954 Was the Juiciest

By Marie McNaughton

In a front-page Monday morning account of a Friday New Year's Eve bank heist: "A Los Angeles gunman who once warned authorities that 'crime is my business,' lies on a stone slab in the Washoe County [Nevada] morgue." Describing a robbery few Cotatians had learned about, *Press Democrat* reporter Denne Peticlerc set the tone for a fit-for-a-true-crime-magazine story.

Peticlerc went on to describe a not-very-funny conspiracy of errors, involving Petaluma barber and ex-convict Donald Anderson, his late friend Ronald L. Barker, and their respective hair-dyed-red wife and girlfriend—not to mention an eyebrow-raising haul of \$39,000, two kidnappings, and a bloody Reno capture.

According to the Jan. 3, 1955, story, "The night before—Thursday—they had stayed in two separate Cotati motels, drinking, and planning last minute details. . . .

"Wearing dark glasses and trench coats, they struck at the Cotati Bank about 8:45 a.m. forcing teller Richard Gray into the vault at gunpoint, then leaving [Gray, Agnes Azevedo, and Gladys Giddings] locked in the vault, and fleeing in their dark 1948 Buick with the loot in a pillow case taken from the Cotati Motel."

The three tellers were rescued from the bank vault by branch manager H.C. Hilliard after an hour and five minutes.

The gang's escape route took them to Occidental, Monte Rio, Highway One, Manchester, Boonville, Hopland, Ukiah, Nice, and Williams, with local deputies and FBI agents hot on their tail—or is that "trail"?

At a Reno motel, the nervous Anderson saw a guest making a phone call in the lobby and assumed that police were being summoned. The gang then kidnapped a guest and the motel owner's wife. Anderson, swinging the barrel of his .357, accidentally shot his accomplice, Barker, who later died in surgery. The surviving three served at least part of their time at the Nevada State prison in Carson City. Three more members of the larger gang were arrested in San Rafael and San Francisco.



Images from the front pages of the Petaluma Argus-Courier, Sept. 2, 1959, and The Press Democrat, Dec. 23, 1959 and Dec. 10, 1967.

Continued on page 2.



Always Willing to Lend a Hand . . .

Text and photo by Judy Gustafson

Surrounded by artifacts donated by the Martin, Revard, and Clothier families, Bruce Martin repairs one of the large exhibit frames in the museum. Having been involved with its initial assembly, Bruce knew just what to do when the loaded pages became too heavy to lift out easily, and he took the framing home to make adjustments in his shop. A few days later, it was back to the museum with everything ready to reassemble, and it's working perfectly again.

Thank you, Bruce!

Ed. Note: Many Cotati Museum treasures from the early 20th century are from the Revard and Clothier families, including ritual objects and clothing from the local Oddfellows Lodge, of which Robert Clothier was a leader. Be sure to see them when the museum reopens.

THANK YOU TO OUR NEW AND RENEWING 2021 MEMBERS

Marion Ackerman
 Mark & Shannon Ackerman*
 Harold Berkemeier*
 Lillian Blodgett
 Richard Braden
 Jon Caldwell
 Diane Canadas
 Ken & Sherri Carli
 Tamara Davis*
 John Dell'Osso
 Jane Ferina
 Melanie Fleek*
 Karen & David Heisel
 Mark & Jolene Ibleto
 Stephen Kent Jones
 Michael & Janet Kurvers*
 Mark & Jan Landman*
 Gary & Robin Malone
 Patrick & Anna Marshment*
 Bruce Martin*
 Gary, Kim & Jake Martin
 Barbara Morrow*
 Kathleen Norwood
 Ellen Ostrand
 John Page*
 Bruce Pearson*
 Fred Reed / Reed's Hair
 Sharie Sbrazza*
 Trudy Simonton
 Dan & Carolyn Torliatt
 Pamela Wilford*
 Jack Withington

Memorial Donations

JoAnn Braden
 Richard Braden
Tubby Braden
 Karen & David Heisel
Burt Chadwick
 Kelly Janney
Diane Montedeocca Davis
 Darlene Engellenner
Don & Perry Goff
 Mark & Jolene Ibleto
Connie Martin
 Kathleen Norwood
 Ellen Ostrand
Marjorie Roselli
 Ken & Sherri Carli
Mike Stevenson
 Michael & Janet Kurvers
All the good people who have passed
 Stephen Kent Jones

General Donations

Bob Draper
 Eric Koenigshofer
 Bette McKnight
 Marie McNaughton

*Indicates a general donation in addition to dues received Dec. 31, 2020 through May 31, 2021.

Cotati Historical Society & Museum
Inside Cotati City Hall at 201 West Sierra Ave
PO Box 7013 Cotati CA 94931

*Take the **NEW CHS**
Virtual Tour of Cotati*

Since CHS was unable to begin its downtown Cotati walking tour program last year, we took a leap into the 21st century. Now anyone anywhere can take a virtual tour of Cotati past and present.

Visit the CHS website:

www.cotatihistoricalsociety.org

Donations/Dues 2021-2022

If you have already paid your dues for 2021 you will be marked paid thru 2022. This form may also be used for donations, memorial donations and volunteering. Thank you for your support of Cotati Historical Society.

Yes I want to join/renew my/our membership thru 2022 @ **\$10 per person** \$ _____

An additional donation of \$ _____ is enclosed.

A memorial donation of \$ _____ is enclosed in memory of: _____

Please send an acknowledgement to: _____ Address _____

Member Name/s _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone _____ Cell _____ Email _____

I would like to assist the Cotati Historical Society in this way:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help staff the museum on Saturday afternoons. | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with membership mailings & data entry. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help with the annual barbecue and silent auction. | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with student field trips and essay contests. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help with publicity and advertising. | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with cataloging archives and artifacts. |

Other ways I might help: _____

Please send to: **Cotati Historical Society, PO Box 7013, Cotati CA 94931**